ISSUE 132 SEPTEMBER 2016

KNOTTING MATTERS

The Magazine of the International Guild of Knot Tyers

INTERNATIONAL GUILD OF KNOT TYERS

The International Guild of Knot Tyers (IGKT) is a registered UK Charity No. 802153

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Annual Subscription Rates		
	/year	/5 yrs
Juniors (under 18)	Free	
Adults	£23	£100
Family	£27	£115
Group (min 10)	by arangement	

KNOTTING MATTERS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE INTERNATIONAL GUILD OF KNOT TYERS

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David Pepper

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The editors welcome the submission of letters, articles, photographs and sketches for publication. Correspondence with the editor may be by e-mail, but more extensive items, such as articles for publication, as well as any pictures, need to be sent as attachments. Pictures should be of good quality. All submissions, which may be edited for publication, must include their author's name and e-mail or postal address.

If there are meetings or other events to be publicised in Knotting Matters, please bear in mind the months of publication - March, June, September and December.

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PRINTED BY GIPPING PRESS Ltd
Tel: 01449 721599

ISSN 0959-2881

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PLEASE NOTE: LETTERS AND ARTICLES FOR THE DECEMBER ISSUE OF KNOTTING MATTERS MUST BE RECEIVED BY 25th NOVEMBER2016

Front cover: 40-strand cross in leather by Maurice McPartlan see p 36

EDITORIAL

Having got our first edition off to the printers on time, we were able to sit back and try to think ahead a bit. From the start, we knew that one of our biggest challenges was always going to be to get a variety of copy that represents the interests of all. So we decided that we would try to shake you readers up a bit to see if we couldn't get a greater diversity of contributions not only in terms of who writes - make no mistake we are extremely grateful to those who contribute regularly - but also where they write from and what their interests are. As it turns out, we think that this September edition has worked out well as it is both varied and carries a number of pieces from new contributors. Be that as it may, we will still have to start from scratch to try to fill the December edition, rather than having articles and pieces in hand that would make our life less frantic. Please do think about what YOU might be able to contribute. In the future, if we don't have enough to fill the magazine, it will just have to go out with BLANK PAGES. Having said that, a very big 'Thank you' to all of you who do contribute and tell us what you think. Maurice

And from our commissioning editor:

In deepest, darkest Dorset, Tarrant Keyneston to be exact, there is an old pub called the True Lovers Knot, see ABOK Nos. 2417/2418. I've seen the hanging sign with the knot painted thereon. The first time I saw it I thought 'That's interesting, not seen a pub named after a knot before'. Later I was told there was a mistake in the knot, though I haven't spotted it; perhaps someone would like point it out. So here's the question is this the only pub in the world with a knot name over the door, or are there lots? What's the origin?

It would be really interesting to find out if there are any other pubs named after knots: perhaps there is a Flemish Eye Splice Arms or a Turks Head Inn somewhere! Write and tell us. Now I think about it, there is a Turks Head near Darlington or thereabouts, but I think it is an actual turbaned head as opposed to the knot.

On page 31 is the start of an occasional series - Knotting as Art. We believe there to be many instances of knots and ropework in art and architecture, all around the world. Please send us good quality photos of any you come across. and include the artist, date, and as much information as possible. Gordon

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Maurice,

Could you please request contributors to include basic dimensions with their photographs? It is difficult to tell, for instance, if the circular mat by Colin Byfleet shown on the cover of KM131 (June 2016) is 6 inches or 6 feet in diameter.

Likewise, how large is the bell from the SS Freshspring (shown on page 6 of the same issue)? Its size – height & diameter – has a direct bearing on the dimensions of bellrope it lacks. A 2 foot bellrope on a 6 inch diameter bell is going to look as incongruous as a 6 inch bellrope on a 2 foot diameter bell.

Relatively few of the items shown in the Knot Gallery on the IGKT website give any indication of size. A quick check, (not exhaustive), revealed only two photographs giving clues, one with a tape measure alongside, and one by the inclusion of a silver coin (but no indication if this was a silver threepenny bit, a sixpence, a shilling, a florin or a halfcrown). Size matters!

Best wishes

Dave Hesketh

oOo

Gordon Teenan writes:
In response to Dave Hesketh re scale, the picture of the bell came from the internet so at the moment I'm unable to give a scale, it will become clear when we are in closer physical contact with the project. If someone can scale it now, please do so. For all I know, perhaps there is an accepted ship to bell ratio as there is for audible fog horns.

I agree completely that evidence of scale is so important and often missing. I became aware of this some time ago when working on a steel mill abroad in an electronic capacity, when a Welsh fitter appeared late at night asking if he could borrow a big hammer.

I lent him my big 2lb hammer which he returned later, with the comment 'Here's your wee toffee hammer back!' In other words there is Jeweller's 'small', and Dock Yard 'small'.

Often there is no need for evidence of scale down to millimetres, but sometimes I would include a rule, a coin, my foot or a passing pedestrian, but as Dave suggests we there does need to be a guide of some sort: see Mr Bastian standing next to his fender in KM 131 p42. The fender is clearly not something you find in Walmart or B&Q!

oOo

Dear Maurice,

It was at Fareham 2002 that my lucky number came up in the grand raffle, and I run to the table to grab the sennit frame made by Jeff and Lesley Wyatt.

Since then, I cultivated a dream, make a sennit frame.

In the last few KM issues are often published photos of beautiful sennit frames and this gave me the go-ahead. I had to start.

The result seems satisfactory.

My best regards

Domenico Colonnese

Congratulations Domenico on your dream come true! Ed

Dear Maurice,

Last year I visited the Duomo in Pisa, Italy. There was extensive restoration work in progress high up in the dome and workmen were erecting scaffolding. The area was cordoned off so it was not possible to see how high they had reached, but they were still adding to the scaffold at the extent of my view.

I was particularly interested by the two men at ground level who were sending scaffold poles to the top, using only a rope over a single pulley high above them. I was surprised to see that they attached the rope about a half a metre from the end of the poles (either one or two at a time) with a simple clove

hitch before hauling them up. It seemed to me to be an inadequate knot, but it was clearly effective enough to judge by the height the structure had already reached, and the survival of the (hatless) workmen. Though I was close enough to see what they were doing, it was too dark to capture them on video and too far away for a flash photograph. But I watched them during several 'lifts' and the procedure remained the same.

I wonder whether other members would have been as surprised as I was, and if they have ever used a clove hitch in similar circumstances or chosen a different knot.

Yours etc

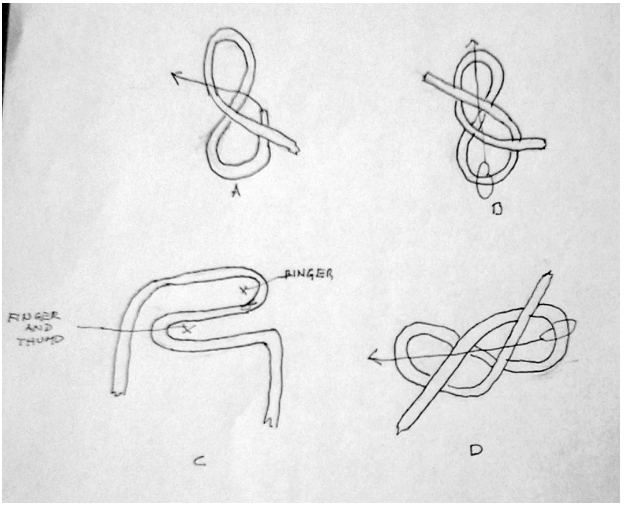
David Pepper

oOo

Dear Maurice,

Ref Dr David Williams article on the Constrictor knot in KM 131.

I find the easiest way of tying the Constrictor knot in hand, two ways. One to tie a small double loop, the second to tie a larger double loop. The first is similar to Dr Williams' twisting method figure B. The way I tie this knot is similar but much easier.



The second method was first shown to me by David Pearson at a Canal festival many years ago.

To make a much larger double loop, double the line and hold the line in your left hand, form a small double loop with your right hand working end and hold it between the finger and thumb of your left hand. Take the right hand working end back to the end of the double line. Put your right hand finger through the loop and gently pull away from your left hand until the loop is double the size you need. Drop the left hand working end down over the loop, push the right hand working end up over the loop. Then fold the right hand side of the loop over the top to match up with the left hand side of the loop. With a little practice both Constrictor knots can be tied in hand.

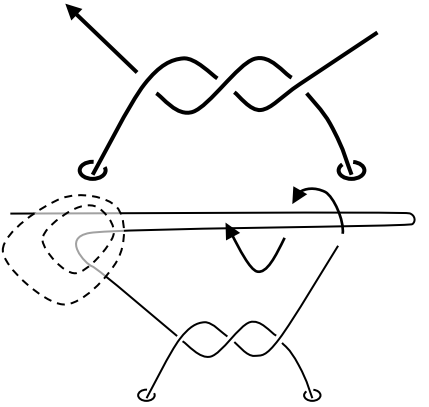
Owen K Nuttall

Dear Maurice,

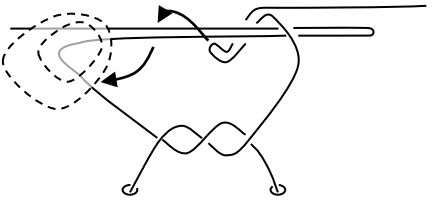
Looping the loop

From the description, I think the knot described in the Times cuttings on p4 of the last Knotting Matters (131) is Ashley's 'Double Shoestring Knot', ABOK 1216. It is made as follows:-

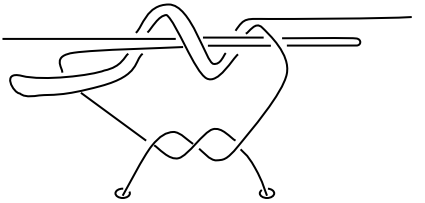
Make the first half of a reef knot.



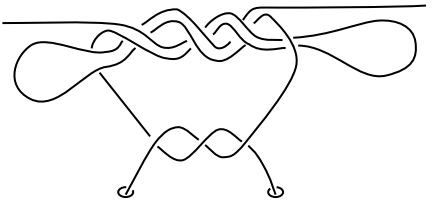
Make a loop with your left hand (using the arrowed end in the diagram above. The thumb mark shows where you hold the loop in place).



Wrap the right lace half-way around the loop and pull it through the hole made by your thumb, forming a second loop.



Take this loop round again and through the same hole.



Pull both loops tight.

Yours etc

Nicolas Wadsworth

Dear Maurice,
Who can remember when they first learned to tie their shoelaces? How old were they? Who taught them, and how? Did it take long? I've met a few who never mastered it at all. I had a next-door neighbour who brought all her lace-ups to me when she learned that I was moving house! She wanted me to tie them all, really tight, before I left. I expect we all remember at least one boy at school who always had one or two shoelaces undone. (I know of a fairly absent-minded academic who cannot tie his tie. If he ever buys a new one, he gets the shop assistant to tie it for him, slips it over his head and once home hangs it alongside the rest of his collection of ready-tied ties!)

You no doubt know that the shoelace bow should not be in line with the foot but at right angles to it. But when did you twig that the most common shoelace knot is a double slipped reef knot?

It used to be standard procedure in the forces to put a knot in one end of a leather lace, thread the other end through from the toe end to ankle, wrap round then tuck it under itself without any knot; is it still done? There is, or was once, a fashion for youngster's trainer laces to be just tucked into them and not tied at all.

Victorian ladies used to fasten the buttons on their boots using a button-hook. I used to tighten up the laces on my ice-hockey boots with a hook for maximum ankle support. Impossible without a hook – very easy to overdo, soon resulting in excruciating pain in the feet.

Will Velcro win the day? Is the writing on the wall for shoelaces?

I'm fascinated by this topic which is surely the earliest learned 'technical' skill, and would be interested to hear the personal experiences of other people.

Regards,
N. King

oOo

(We are aware of the following resources which are relevant to this writer's interest in shoelacing.

http://www.fieggen.com/shoelace/tying.htm
Burkard Polster: The Shoelace Book: A Mathematical Guide to the Best (and Worst) Ways to Lace Your Shoes (Mathematical World)
Ian Fieggen: Laces: 100s of Ways to Pimp Your Kicks

Are there others, perhaps in other languages? - Ed)

Dear Maurice,

Robert Underhill piece in KM 131 and the Simon series of Knots

The late Harry Asher would be so pleased to see his Simple Simon being put to such practical use. Harry was one of the members at the founding meeting on board RSS Discovery in 1986. He was a most original-thinking knot tyer. He had a wonderful way with naming his knots, such as "Pedigree Cow", "Sleeping Beauty", "Breakwell Tart" and "Brummycham Bowline".

He first published his "New System of Knotting" volumes 1 & 2 himself in 1986, it's now almost impossible to find.

His "The Alternative Knot Book "was published in 1989, reprinted 1992,1995 and, whilst out of print, is readily available on used book sites at prices ranging from a few pence to over £100. If you do not own a copy, it is well worth obtaining one. Others have taken up his knots and spread them around the world, giving them a life of their own. Robert Underhill's use gave me much pleasure, thank you Robert and thank you Harry.

Des Pawson.

oOo

Dear Maurice,

I came across these knots on a quay in Mevagissey, Cornwall, UK, securing vessels the cost of which, in parts of the country, would buy a small bungalow.

I wondered what the owners were thinking about. Had they been taught, or learned by watching other people, and, perhaps more importantly, did they know where to go to learn properly?

It worried me that, as tied to rings on the quay, these knots were vulnerable to casual vandalism, and even if tied on board, would be liable to jam under stress and be difficult or impossible to release in an emergency.

I'm not blaming them, but I have met one or two people who have heaped scorn on a knot tyer, (not there to hear it, of course!), saying 'that's just wrong', or 'why didn't they use a cloven back-hitched bend' or some such.

What these critics forget is that someone once showed them themselves a useful knot or two, often with great patience. It's a human failing to demonstrate one's superior knowledge. It is a bit harder to say, 'That's an interesting knot, let me show you the one I use'.

Yours ever,

Marina Mooring Monitor

Dear Maurice,
More about Sheep/Sheet shank. I was reading my copy of "Bends, Hitches Knots and Splices" a compendium drawn from The Lonsdale volume "Cruising & Ocean Racing" by John Irving Lt.-Commander, RN, (1953), when I found a page referring to The Sheep-, Dog-, tand Cat- Shank. They all fulfilled the same function but with different ways of securing the bights. This would tend to cast doubt on whether it was ever called a 'Sheet Shank'.
Gordon

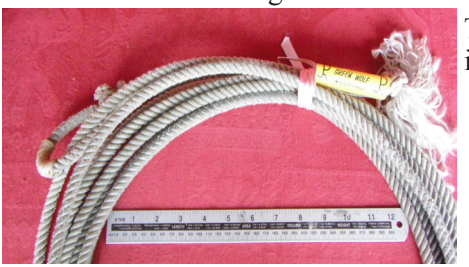
Lassos: the secret revealed

by Cazbil

As a small boy brought up on a diet of films about Cowboys and Indians, with Tom Mix, Randolph Scott, Montgomery Clift and John Wayne, and I was always impressed by their lassoing skills. I spent some time with bits of clothes line (causing a little local difficulty on washday) trying to lasso imaginary steers, mustangs and bad guys (the ones with the black hats!) with mixed success.

At some stage I did tumble to the trick of putting a washer on the end and an overhand knot, which meant you can hold the washer and spin without the rope twisting up. At this point, our American cousins can skip to the next page because I expect this is all old hat to them.

On a visit to the States I discovered the secret! The rope is very, very stiff and hard as a chocolate frog! No wonder they could perform such wondrous feats.



The photographs are of a 32-foot 5/8 inch lasso made by 'Running-P Ropes'

the model is a ‘Green Wolf’. Neither did I know that there was a market in used ones, and that they come in such a variety.

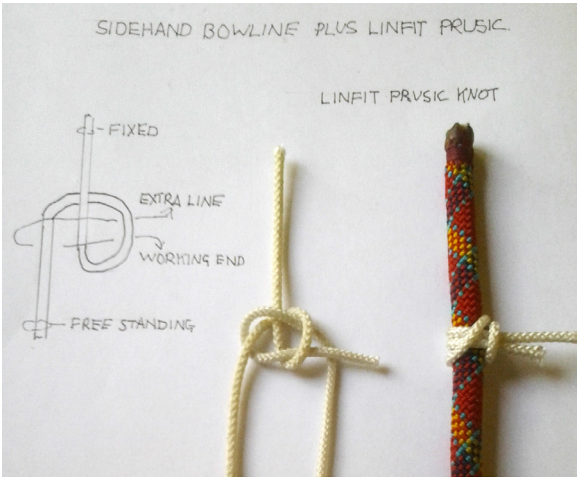
Note the stitched leather piece and that the end is well melted in. The other end has an overhand knot but is left tasselled.

All that remains is to discover the actual manufacturing process, clearly the rope was never made in its present state of rigidity.

Because nylon tends to stiffen in the presence of UV, it could just be left in the sun, something of a tedious process in the UK, though more practical in California. I think it’s called field hardening, but I suppose in a manufacturing environment, in the interests of efficiency and consistency a more technical system is employed. Curiously the tasselled or frayed end is soft. In the photograph of that end, the pale turquoise section was under the label – it could be the colour of the original material.

Sidehand Bowline

by Owen K Nuttall



A simple way of attaching an additional rope to a free standing one, or attaching the tails of a flag to a Halyard.

If the size of the tails and the Halyard are very different, when the main line is pulled, the knot distorts into a kind of Prusik knot.

Hiding His Light?

by a North Devon stringer

The new Editor-in-Chief of Knotting Matters, Maurice McPartlan, sent me some images a while ago and unfortunately they missed the last issue under Lindsey Phillpott's editorship. Maurice was reluctant to have them put forward under the new regime, but I insisted.

Some will have seen his designs for three-dimensional Turksheads in the DVD Advanced Knotting.

Maurice has continued his interest in this complex technique and, as you can see opposite, was successful enough to allow him, a 'Pom', to gain Second Place in last year's Royal Melbourne Show with this beautifully made cross and necklace of kangaroo lacing.

SUPPLY SNIPPETS

Monograph #8 'Sailmaker's Palms' is out of print, and will not be available for the foreseeable future.

#7 'Sailors' Rope Mats' has been reprinted and is now available at £10.

'Lanyards' has been increased to £4 after reprint.

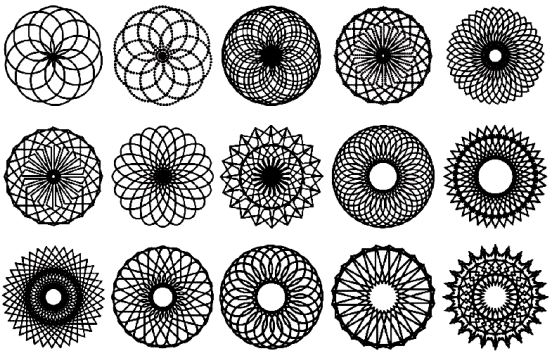
We are looking to reprint Eric Franklin's 'Turksheads the Traditional Way' and possibly Brian Field's works (see Late News).

Terry - Supplies Secretary

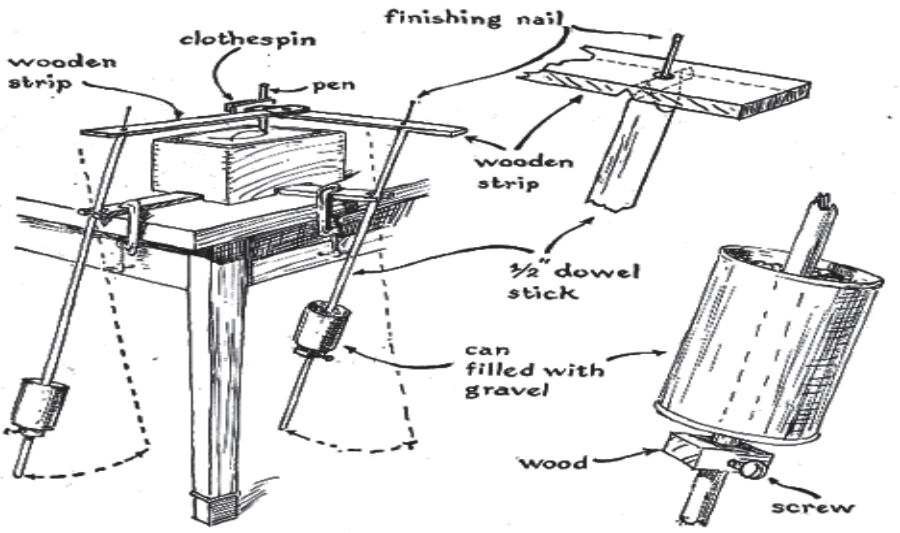
Circular Mats 2

by Colin Byfleet

In my first article about circular mats I gave examples of the analysis of some Celtic knots by Alexander Åström. Nils Christian Rossing, a knotting mathematician at the University of Trondheim has taken a different approach and his work is available as an IGKT book 'Design and Make Rope Mats and Rosettes'. He looks at the problem using the sort of patterns made by a Spirograph as his starting point. With one of these 'toys' you can create a wide variety of intricate patterns. Some examples can be seen below:

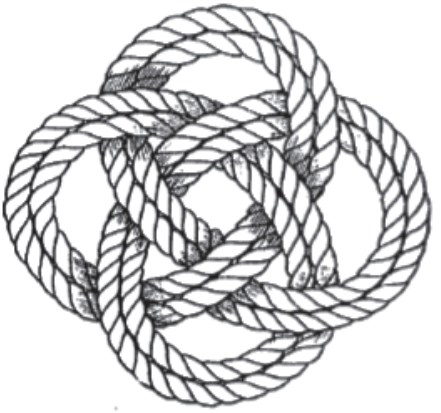


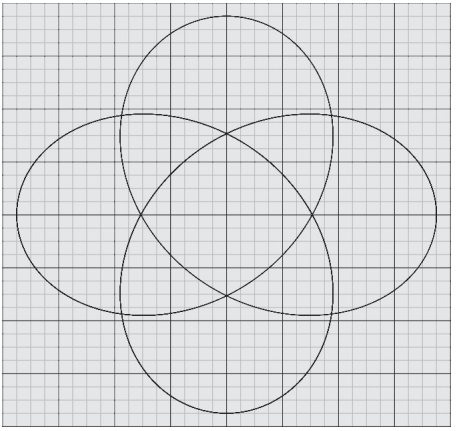
Such patterns can also be created by a 19th century invention – the two-point pendulum or harmonograph which works by having two independent oscillating pendulums driving a pen.



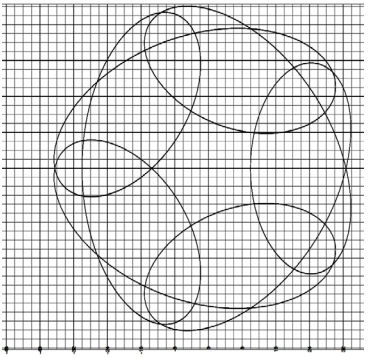
Both these devices produce patterns called Lissajous or Bowditch figures. The simplest of these is a circle, produced by two oscillations at right angles, both having the same frequency. Such oscillations are described by simple mathematical functions, called Sines or Cosines, which many will remember from trigonometry lessons.

By adding several such terms together one can produce the same patterns as the spirograph or harmonograph. For example, the Guild's logo, a 4-bight, 3-lead Turkshead is produced by adding two oscillations where one is four times the frequency of the other. My only equations in this article give this mathematically: $x = \cos(-t) + \cos(3t)$ $y = \sin(-t) + \sin(3t)$
where the values of x and y are calculated as the value of t goes between 0 and 2π (π because we are dealing with circles!)

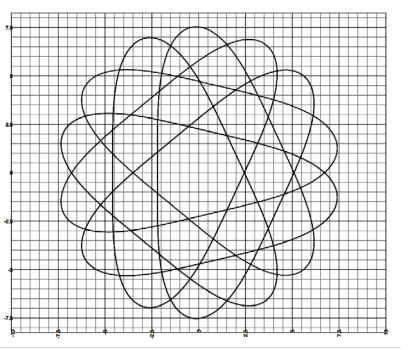




With a suitable choice of frequencies, patterns for other Turksheads can be created similarly.

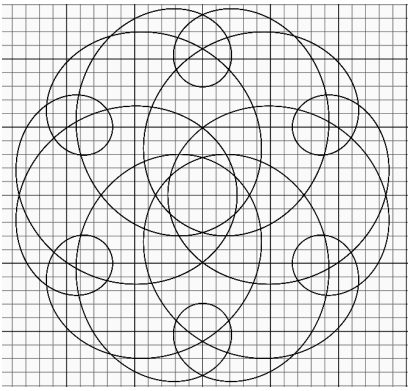


3 term

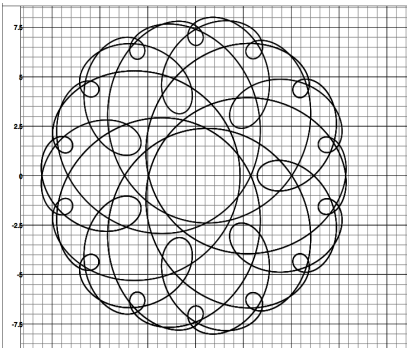


4 term

Using more terms in equations, similar to those above, more complex designs can be drawn. In the following diagrams, the number of terms in the equations increases as shown.

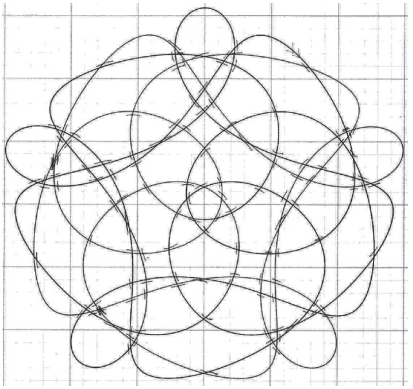


5 term



8 term

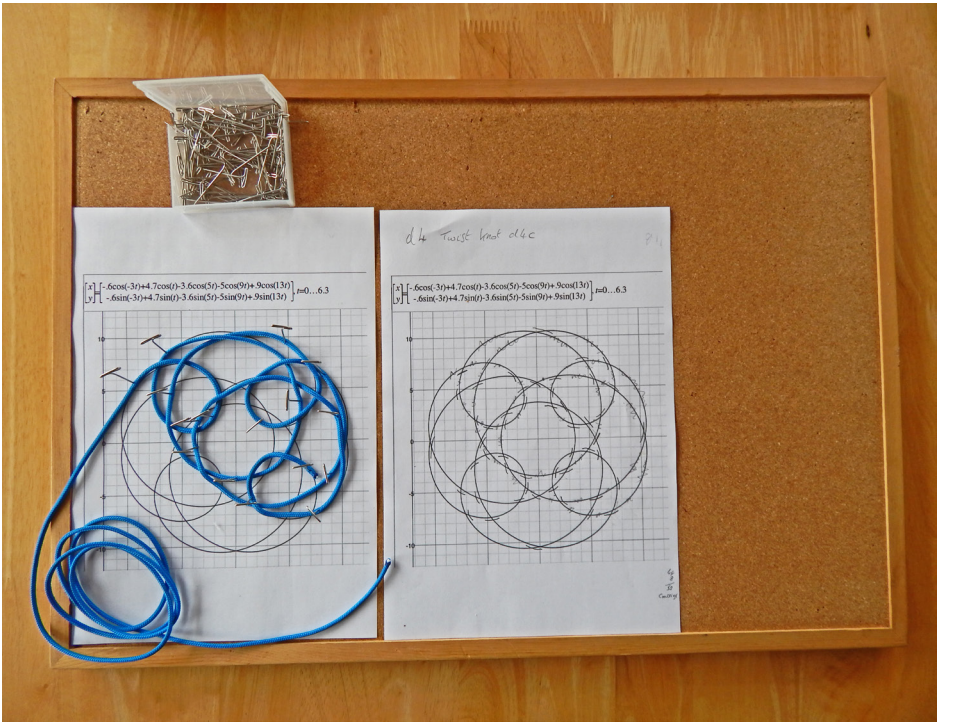
These two are members of the family described in the first article (d6 l1 k5 s1 and d7 l2 k4 s1 respectively).



and 9 term

which looks like this when made up.

I normally make these mats using a cork-board and pins, with one design to lay the cord onto and another to check the over/under weave. It is quite easy to lose one's way in a complicated layout and pulling things apart is a real annoyance (he said with feeling!). From the pattern generated as above, one simply has to add the over/under pattern by hand (unless you're cleverer than me and can get the computer to do it).



Creating new patterns is an interesting occupation and I use the built-in Grapher program on my MacBook. Graph and Function Plotter are free for PC users.

Nils Rossing's book contains some drawn-out mat patterns as well as a considerable number of equations, which you can use in the above programs. There are also instructions about the best way of modifying these to give you your own unique designs. It is very satisfying to create a completely new pattern which looks good when made up.

But I also have some mat templates which I'm happy to share – please write to secretary@igkt.net and visit the following address (on two lines, but it's all one address):

https://www.dropbox.com
/sh/odamvmxi7ely8lt/AADk_PFwuszsyRYH6NyB7o_ca?dl=0

Happy matting!

A Stingray barb Letter-opener

by Leo Isambert

Materials needed:

Wooden handle from a foam brush
Epoxy putty
Rotary tool
Safety goggles
Respirator mask (the barb is made of bone and when sanded creates a fine dust)
Cord
Rubber gloves for when you mix the epoxy
Painter's masking tape to wrap the barb with to avoid scrapes!

1. Start out with a stingray barb and the wooden handle from a foam brush (if you search on Google for stingray barbs you will find them easily).

2. Cut a slot in the handle so that the barb fits snugly. Trim down the barb so that it fits well in the slot. (I use my rotary tool with sandpaper attachment).

3. Test fit the barb into the slot of the handle and adjust as necessary by grinding down the barb. Here is the barb properly fitted into the handle.

4. Using epoxy putty, fill the gaps between the barb and the slot, being sure to force the putty into any spaces inside, and then fill in the sides with a little extra for sanding. Leave overnight and then sand down so that the excess epoxy putty is nice and smooth and even with the handle, with a smooth transition from the barb to the handle.

5. This is the tricky part – figuring out how many strands of cord will cover the circumference of the core and how long will they need to be to cover its length using the "over two" method.

I use #45 cotton cord "rat stuff" (if you do an online search you will find that Marty Combs sells it) and I have found that 7-10 times the length of your handle per strand will complete your project. You do not want to get near the end and then fall short by a couple of inches of cord!

Middle your strands and seize them onto the middle of the handle. Begin covering the handle using the over two or whatever method you prefer, working towards the barb.

6. Continue to cover the handle until you reach the barb and completely cover the epoxy taper.

7. Unseize your strands and undo some of your covering knots (3-4 should be enough) so that you have a smooth transition, now cover the rest of the wooden handle in the opposite direction.

8. Finish off with a manrope knot at the heel end and finish off the barb end with half a manrope knot.

9.Trim off the excess and hide the ends. Your letter opener is now complete and ready for varnishing or any coating you desire!

If you have any questions please feel free to email me (leoisambert@yahoo.com). I hope you find this project practical and enjoyable!

Happy knotting!

LATE NEWS

The Guild has ordered reprints of some of the books, written by members, which have been out of print for some time.

Breastplate Designs and Concerning Crosses by Brian Field

Knotted Fabrics and Turksheads Alternatives by Stuart Grainger

Please see the **Books & Guild Items For Sale** button on the website – no need to log in.

Some Thoughts on Serving

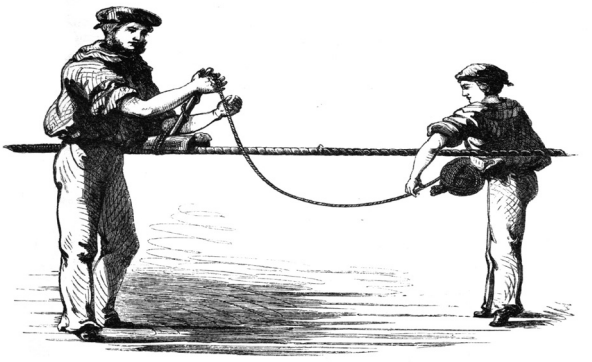
by Des Pawson

Are you a board or mallet sort of person ?

Worm & parcel with the lay, turn & serve* the other way.

*Serving :- Encircling a rope with line or spunyarn &c to preserve it from being chafed.

David Steel, *Elements & Practice of Rigging*, 1794.



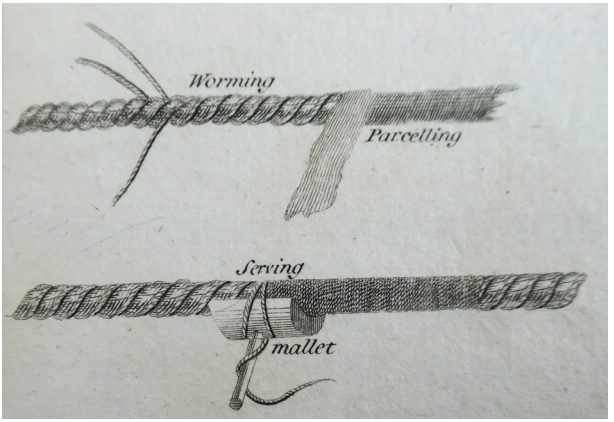
Lieut George Nares, Seamanship 1862

Worm and parcel with the lay, turn and serve the other way - is an old adage.

The protection of a ship's rigging, both from chafe and from the weather, is a major task. Much of the standing [ie fixed] rigging, be it made from fibre rope or wire rope, is covered with what is called serving, the first description of which is to be found in Henry Mainwaring's Seaman's Dictionary, written about 1620.

The full task is carried out in a number of stages:

first the rope is tarred; then the groves between the strand are filled with small soft line, frequently spunyarn made up from old ropeyarns, which is called worming; then the rope is covered with tarred canvas, sacking or even old shirt, called parcelling; and finally the rope is covered with a tight binding of marline or spunyarn, the process called serving. Lastly another good coating of tar or rigger's mix is a good idea.

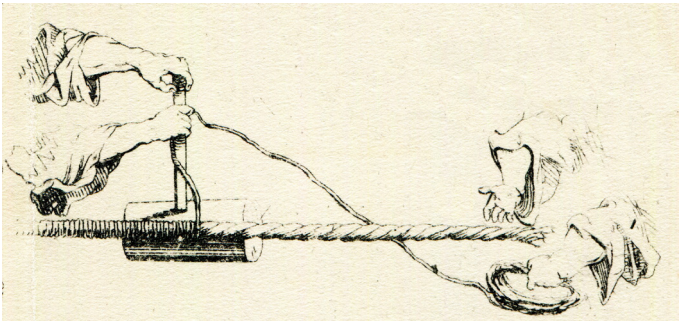


David Steel, Elements & Practice of Rigging, 1794.

As well as chafe protection, this was also done to keep the water out, so where it is shrouds that are being covered in this way, it is important to parcel from the bottom up, so that the tarred canvas forms an overlap and any water that does get through runs off the outside rather than have a chance of working itself inside to the rope, if the parcelling was done the other way. It is important to think of this even if you are not serving the entire length of the shrouds, but just the splices. Parcel from the eye up at the bottom, but from the eye down for the top of the shroud

To make this serving tightly and evenly on the rope has led to the evolution of many tools that fit into the broad description of serving boards and serving mallets which come in many forms.

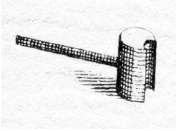
Serving mallets



Åke Classon Rålamb Skeps Byggereri, 1696

As early as 1696, the Swede, Åke Classon Rålamb, in his Skeps Byggereri, shows a serving mallet with a round head and a groove on its side where it fits round the rope to be served. The serving material is wrapped round the head and the handle to give friction, to keep the serving tight and even, as the mallet is revolved round the rope. The ball of line is passed by a second person.

Thomas Riley Blankley in the first illustrated English sailors' dictionary, his Naval Expositor of 1751, shows the serving mallet with the groove on its end which is how it is usually found in the British Isles.



Thomas Riley Blankley Naval Expositor, 1751

There are a number of variations as to how one cares to wrap the marline or spunyarn round the mallet and its handle, the idea being that the friction is sufficient to make the serving as tight as possible, without breaking the serving material.

I prefer to bring the material round the head behind the handle, round the head and rope, and back up round, with a few turns on the handle.

A selection of serving mallets

Serving Boards

Serving boards are probably as old, if not older, than serving mallets. Instead of a round head with a groove in, they are flat with a groove on the side. Regardless of their shape they work in much the same manner.

A selection of Serving Boards

Which is the best serving tool?

It is worth noting that making the serving mallet, with its round head, really requires the use of a lathe, but the board can be made, at a pinch, with nothing more than a knife. Therefore, those people and organisations who have access to manufacturers will tend to use mallets, hence their use in the Royal Navy and by many shore-based riggers, those both in naval dockyards and working in the fitting-out of merchant ships.

These mallets would probably have been made by the block-maker, as many block-makers list and show serving mallets, together with fids, amongst their products. They also manufactured the occasional board, to cater for those who had developed the taste for these tools, which are actually more trouble to make with machine tools, than are mallets. Parsimonious owners in the merchant navy and the poor sailor or fisherman, who could not afford to buy ready-made tools, tended to use a serving board.

So, if the board was the tool you were taught with, you may well spend the rest of your time choosing to be a Board Man rather than a Mallet Man.

© Des Pawson 10.9.2015 first appeared in Classic Sailor November 2015

Bell Ropes
by Joe Bennett

The spiral bell rope has a core of 21mm wooden dowel. The eye is six-strand round sennit followed by a 9-strand MW knot. The Next is ABOK#735 made with 12 strands followed by a diamond-patterned knot of my own. The main part of the work is 16-strand Spanish Hitching into which are worked 4 sections of 14-strand sennit to give the raised spiral effect. A Globe Knot enclosed in an 8-barred cage finishes the job apart from a few tubular knots to separate the different pieces of work. The grey cord is 2.5mm. The spirals are made from 2mm cord and the diamond section is made with 1.4mm and 1.5 mm cord.

This bell rope is of similar construction to the one above.

This one starts with a covered ring. Twelve lengths of 2mm VB cord are passed through the ring. The parts at the ring are two short lengths of 6-strand round sennit which are then secured with a small TH. The other three tubular knots are my own. A short length of square knotting is followed by 24-strand Spanish

Hitching over a length of 21mm dowelling which extends down to the caged sphere. This hitching must be made in rows rather than the usual method of one continuous spiral. The method of doing this will have to be shown at another time. Between the second and third THs is just coloured cord laced into the hitches. The main part of the bell rope is similar to the one above but the 8 sennits, in this case, are worked in vertically rather than diagonally. The bottom part is similar to the bell rope at the top of the previous page.

The core for this one is 28mm dowelling rounded off at the top. Apart from tubular knots and globe knot the nylon cord used is advertised as 2mm (e-bay). When tightened on the job it is more like 1.4 mm. The eye is formed from 18 doubled strands of this cord which are cockscombed. A small TH and mat are next then a short length of square knotting to cover the rounded part of the core. Below this is a narrow tubular knot. The main body of the bell rope is Spanish Hitching of 36 strands which must be worked in rows rather than one continuous spiral with the warp. At the start of the diamond pattern, as the work progresses, another 36 strands are introduced. In any row, 36 strands can be seen and the other 36 are hidden. For this pattern no strands are cut off or added after all 72 strands are in play. The work is finished off with a Globe Knot in a 12-barred cage.

Multi-tasking
by Anke Gregersen

I started to get interested in knotting about a year ago. But I'm still working and have lots of hobbies, for example knitting, So I can't concentrate on knotting all the time.

I find practising knotting more satisfying when I have a useful result at the same time. For example a multi-tasking rope:

Take about 3m of a 3-strand, 12mm diameter rope. Find the middle, form a loop and fix it with tape. Undo all the strands, fix the ends with tape. Now you have 6 strands for knotting.

Tie the knots you want to practise.

I started with a 6-strand crown sinnet,
followed by a twisted bar
followed by another crown sinnet
and finished with a Matthew-Walker-knot.

For the twisted bar I worked with 4 strands in the centre and did the knotting with two strands.

I often use YouTube as a 'teacher'.

You can add some decorative items if you like.

Like pearls or stones with a hole in them. (In German, we call them Hühnergötter).

Finally undo the strands at the bottom and brush them.

Now you have a handsome tool.

To stop a door closing put the loop over one handle and hang the lower part of the rope over the other handle.

You can also use it for your kitchen tissue or to keep a curtain in place.

Little & Large

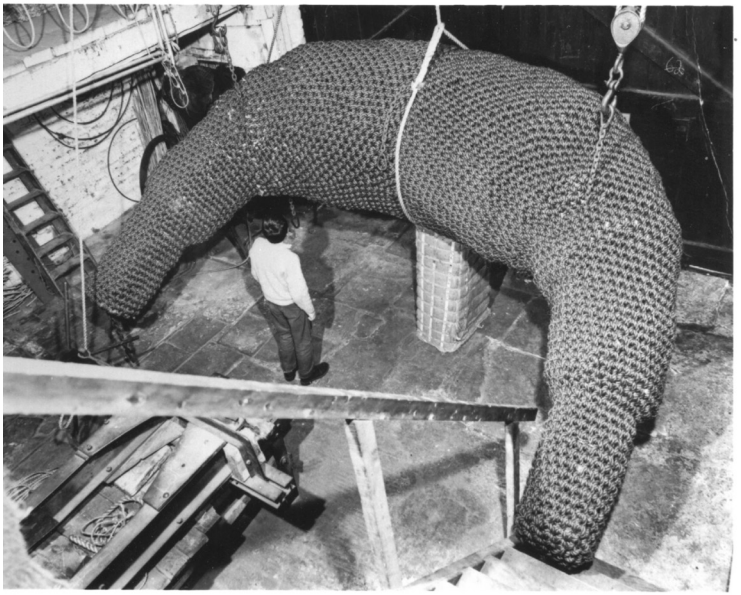
Pascale Dupuis and Des Pawson

Shared by Pascale with the French IGKT e-mail group

Les deux défenses sur la gauche sont réalisées à partir de "cul de porc" et la mini-défense à droite est réalisée avec des demi-clés.

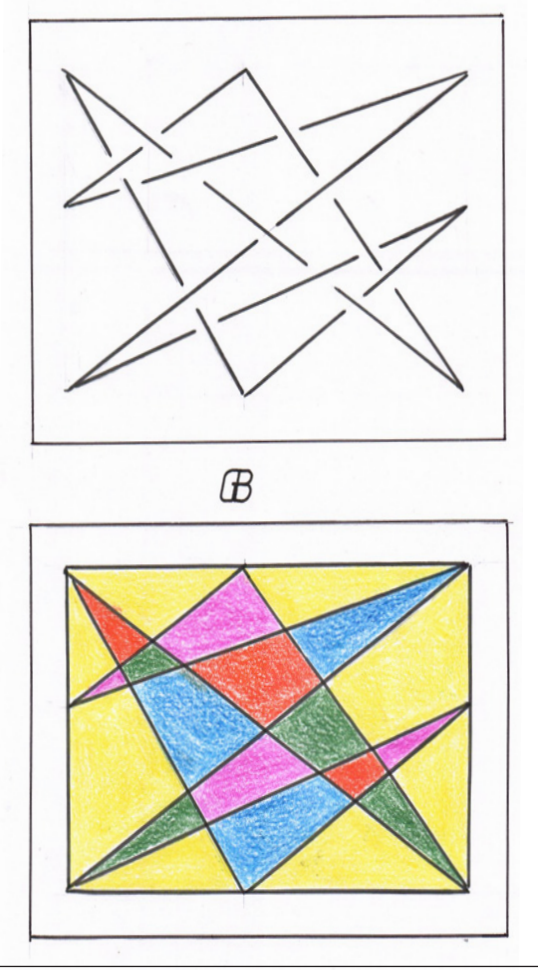
The two fenders on the left are based on the wall knot and the mini-fender on the right is made with half-hitches.

This jumbo fender was made by J Jamieson & Co (Liverpool) Ltd probably sometime in the 1960s. They later became part of the group that included Goodyear & Hick Ltd, cargo net makers and John Banks & Sons block makers.



Knotting as ART??

Geoffrey Budworth



CORRIGENDA

KM #131 INDIAN ROPE TRICK Page 31. The final paragraph should have begun: In 1934 they offered a prize of 500 guineas (£525) ... not £225. The author apologises, as do the editors.

KM #131 APWA AGM Page 13. Bill Morris was awarded the third prize (not the first) in the decorative whip class. Peter Thorndike won the class with his Snowy River whip (illustrated). The author apologises.

Shackle Tackle

by A R Gossy

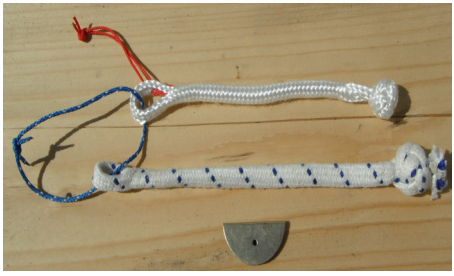
I sat in on the soft shackle teach-in at the Fareham meeting and was pleased to come away with a fully functional soft shackle! For those not at the meeting, a soft shackle is a kind of lightweight carabiner, a way of fastening eg clew lines to avoid the risk of injury from a solid shackle, when tacking.

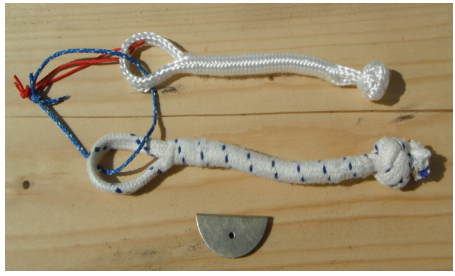
I found some empty covering at home, but it wasn't a breeze! I couldn't get the measurements and proportions right, and spent a lot of time getting them sorted because the material was bigger. And the material is important, because with the stuff I had, the friction was very high and I couldn't use the little red 'pull apart' in the picture, though it can be worked open reasonably easily. Coming to the knot (the Carrick Bend), as is often the case, I had to remind myself how to tie it.

Incidentally, Carrick was the name of the Cutty Sark's sister ship, now renamed The City of Adelaide. Guess where it is! Some consider it bad luck to change the name of a vessel, but it is not uncommon. If you look closely at cargo boats you often see the welded-on name painted over and another one added. It is interesting to note that most Japanese vessels have a name with 'Maru' added.

Back to the knot. As usual it was a case of 'How did that go again?' It is easy when someone is there to say, poke that through there or whatever! Still, it is done now, success is better than perfection, and I'm pleased with it, though I don't expect to use it as such, it was done more as an academic exercise.

As a matter of interest the metal thing in the picture is a 'shepherd's whistle' You stick it in your mouth and blow. You can play tunes with it, if you want to! There's quite a knack to it, and a lot of people can't do it. When I got it, I was told 'don't bring it back saying it doesn't work, they do work, but none of us can make it go!' It is used to control sheep dogs; cheap and cheerful, easy to make or buy, and no moving parts!





‘Simplified Turk’s-heads’ Simplified

by Jim Caswell

In his wonderful little book “**Simplified Turk’s-heads**” **(2003 - The Rams Skull Press ISBN: 15713184)**, Ron Edwards illustrated his “simplified Turk’s-head” method based on using a mandrel with an even number of tacks and having the starting strand “…go 1–over”. The “…go 1–over” step was not clearly described but basically meant ‘create a bight directly after the first crossing’. Ignoring the modulo arithmetic explanation involved, this simple rule ensures that, from that point on, the working strand runs adjacent and parallel to the standing strand and construction of the knot is “simplified” in that the strand path becomes self-evident and construction becomes “follow the leader”. It also means that for “Regular Turk’s-heads” (single wrap) worked by this method, the number of Parts will be one more than the number of Bights (eg 3Partsx2Bights, 5Px4B, 7Px6B etc) and for “Long Turk’s-heads” (multiple wraps) the number of Parts will be one more than the number of wraps times the number of Bights (for example: 5Px2B, 9Px4B, 13Px4B, 13Px6B, etc). This family of Turk’s-heads is quite extensive and can provide an appropriate knot for many requirements. I have used this method as my starting point for some time and was surprised to find that by following the same rules, but starting with the first bight from the middle of the strand and working effectively with two strands, somewhat in the manner of a two-strand plait, the principal advantages of Ron’s method are retained and the process becomes (I find) somewhat simpler (hence my title) and more manageable, with several additional advantages:

- Knot structure remains symmetrical at all times.
- No need for Mandrel with preset tacks.
- Relatively easy to keep strands in position manually.
- Pins can be utilized for temporary support if necessary.
- Strands self-supporting after a few cycles.
- In many cases the knot can be worked directly onto job.
- The number of Parts and Bights becomes a secondary consideration.
- Each return cycle of the pair of strands (ie Down then Up) effectively and seamlessly “puts down a new track” then “splits the new track”.
- Return cycle can be repeated (ie New tracks added) until desired cover completed.
- Length of working strand is halved (probably the handiest).

The following diagrams illustrate the procedure:

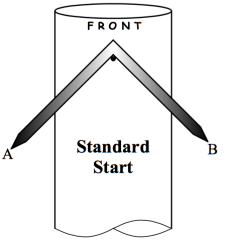
"Simplified" Regular Turk's-heads with even bights

Rule: For selected strand, 2nd Crossing is same as 1st Crossing

[For this illustration 1st and 2nd crossings are Strand A over Strand B]

[Note: Repeat cycle for strand pair is Top to Bottom then back to Top]

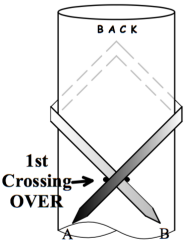
1st Cycle:



Step 1

Create Bight at middle of strand. Trap with finger or use pin to locate if necessary.

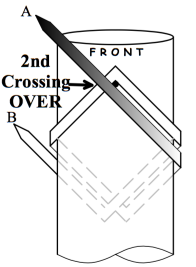
Position strands to left (A) and right (B) at approx. 45°



Step 2

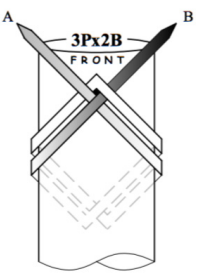
Wrap strands to centre back with Strand A OVER Strand B.

Trap crossing with fingers or use pins to locate if necessary.



Step 3

Create bights at back. Wrap strands to front. Keep strands close and parallel to standing strands. Pass strand A OVER standing strand at bight.

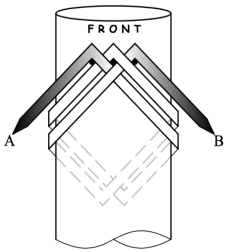


Step 4

Pass strand B OVER-UNDER.

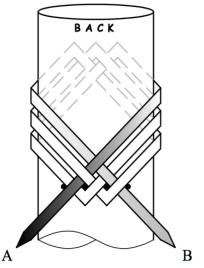
Close strands A and B to complete 3part by 2bight knot OR continue to 2nd Cycle (Step 5) to raise to next knot in series (I.e. 5Px4B).

2nd Cycle:



Step 5

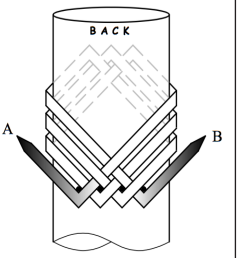
Create new bights with each strand and wrap down to back. Keep strands close and parallel to standing strands



Step 6

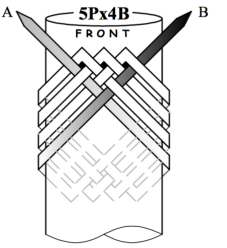
Complete crossings complimenting standing pattern

(I.e. "Follow-the-Leader").



Step 7

Create new bights. Wrap up to front. Keep strands close and parallel to standing strands.



Step 8

Complete crossings complimenting standing pattern. Close A and B for 5Px4B knot OR continue to 3rd Cycle to raise knot to next in series (I.e. 7Px6B).

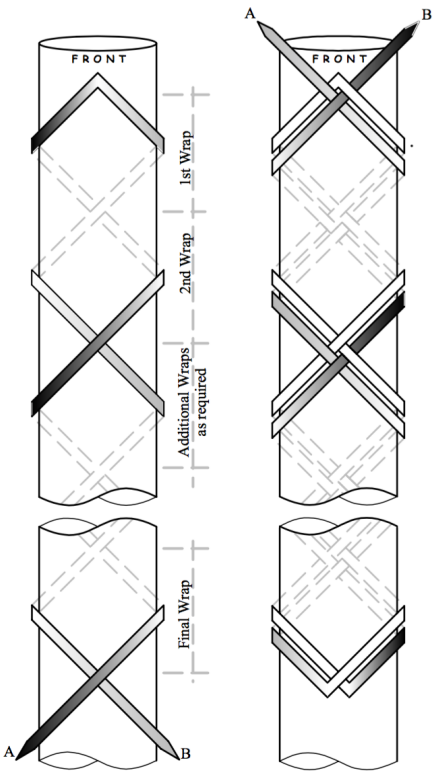
3rd+ Cycles: Repeat Steps 5 to 8 as necessary to raise knot to required size.

"SIMPLIFIED" LONG TURK'S-HEADS WITH EVEN BIGHTS

Rule: For selected strand all crossings on initial wrap are same.

[E.G: for this illustration all crossings on initial wrap are Strand A over Strand B

1st Cycle



Step 1

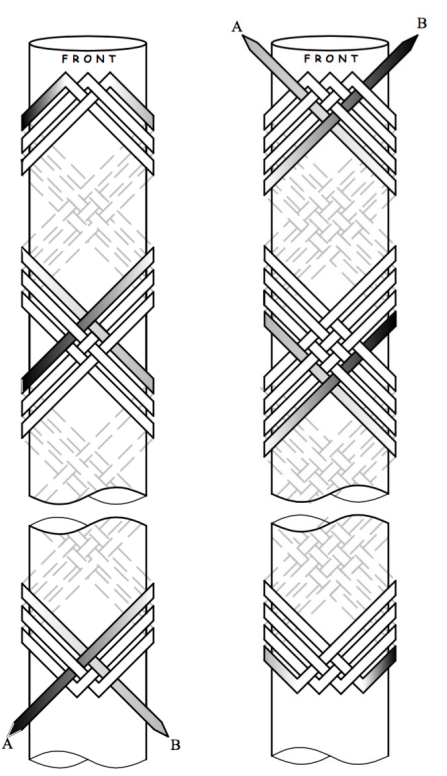
Step 2

From Standard Start, wrap strands down passing alternately to the back then front with Strand A OVER Strand B at each crossing. Wrap as many times as necessary for required cover (Note: Final wrap can be either to Front or Back)..

Create new Bights at bottom after final crossing. Wrap strands back up to top keeping strands close and parallel to adjacent standing strands while complimenting standing pattern.

Close Strands A and B for 2Bight Knot OR continue to 2nd Cycle (Step 3) to raise to next knot in series (4Bight Knot).

2nd Cycle



Step 3

Step 4

Continue wrapping strands alternately while working down to bottom then back to top keeping each working strand close and parallel to adjacent standing strand and complimenting standing pattern.

On return to top close working strands to complete 4Bight Knot OR continue to 3rd +Cycle to raise knot to next in series (6Bight Knot).

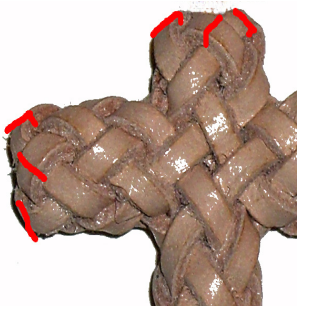
3rd+ Cycles: Repeat Steps 3 and 4 as necessary until desired cover completed.

40-Strand 'Cross' Plait
by Maurice McPartlan

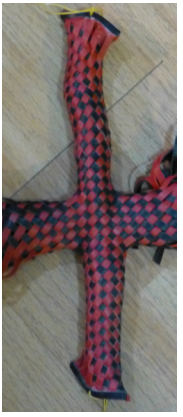
Having been "outed", by a person who shall not be named (they know who they are!) I thought that I might as well try and explain how I made the cross.

The idea for this plait really came from one of those "I wonder if …" moments. Having made cross-shapes in a TurksHead format, it seemed obvious that cutting the bights of a TH-cross would turn it into plaits.

As the crosses I have made are generally 4B, this would give two 8-strand (vertical) plaits which join in the middle and divide to create the (horizontal) bars.



Turks Head to plait



6mm red and black

As I never make life easy for myself, I left out the stage of trying to actually replicate a 4B cross and jumped straight to trying to work out the 40-strand (two times a 20-strand plait) cross!

What I quickly discovered was that a theoretically simple exercise can be rather more complicated in practice! Getting 20 strands of 2mm wide leather into place for plaiting took some doing, and I eventually reverted to trying the idea out with 6mm leather, using two colours to get a feel for the process.

Another complication is that a 20-strand round plait needs a core. I used shavings from when I trimmed the leather.

Getting the right size was a question of trial and error, or rather lots of error, many trials and eventually something that worked.

20-strand plait

Perhaps a small aside, I use lace that I cut by hand in a spiral around a piece of kangaroo hide. I then have to stretch it – different parts of the skin react differently – and then trim it again and split it to bring it to as uniform a size as possible Some of the trimmings, though not strong enough for plaiting make a good core filling.

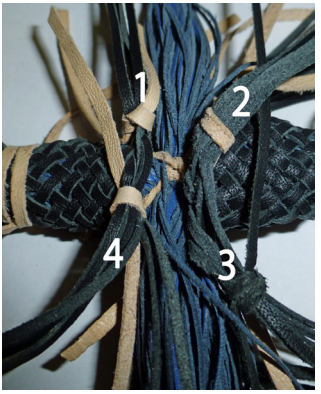
Step one: Two 20-strand round plaits (while I used kangaroo leather, other leather could be used – though it cannot be worked as fine – or even synthetic materials that do not have a rectangular cross-section).

Plaited down the back

In order to prepare for marrying the two plaits, however, the bottom five strands to the right and left need to be tied off and the top five plaited further at the back, so that the back and the front of the plait both come to a point and are the same length.

NB However you start your plaits, it is worth attaching the ten left-hand strands together and similarly with the right-hand strands (unlike the picture below where the strands are not tied off); the reason for this will become clear later. In the 6mm trial shown above, I glued each set of ten strands to another horizontal piece.

Core and plait



First join

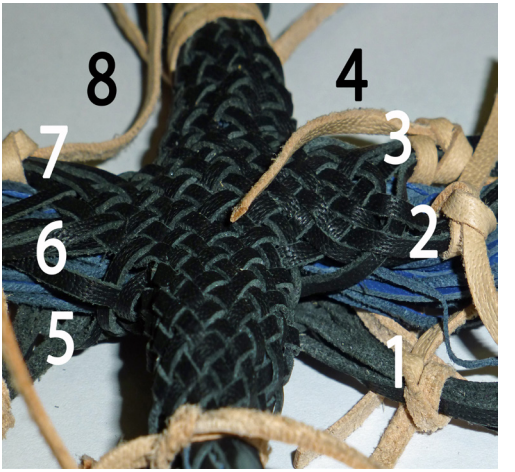
Once the two plaits are in place (with the plaited "points" close together) you should have eight bunches of five strands each.

Step two: For the sake of argument, for the following step, work with bunches 1 & 2. When the bunches are untied and the strands laid out properly, the two bunches can be plaited together and then re-tied-off.

The same steps are then taken with bunches 3 & 4.

The plait is then turned over and the same procedure carried out with the four bunches on that side.

Step three: At this stage it is probably worth checking all the strands and adjusting any that seem either too slack or too tight. Working with fine leather I find that a light dusting of talc helps this process (see picture *'Needs adjusting'* below). For heavier leather, plaiting soap will work but on the small stuff it tends to make the strands stick together!



Initial side plait

Step four: Starting with bunches 1 & 2, carry out the same process of untying bunches, organising the strands and plaiting the two bunches together.

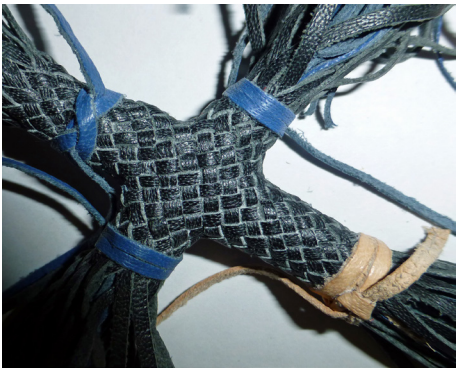
However, instead of retying the bunches you will see that the strands of bunch 1 are now running parallel to bunch 3 and those of bunch 2 to bunch 4 so the four bunches have now become two.

With the ten strands in each hand the plaiting of 3 & 4 can be completed and the two bunches tied off.

The process is now repeated with bunches 5 & 6 and then 7 & 8.

Step five: Readjust the strands to get as even a lie (and look) to the plaiting as possible. A small marline spike is very helpful.

Needs adjusting



Ready for ends

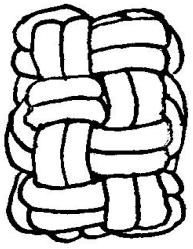
Step six: Ensure that your plaits on each arm of the cross are slightly longer that length you require for the finished piece. Tie off the arms of the cross so that the outside of the tie is at the length you require.

[NB Here you need to do as I say and not as I did! I untied the bunches and paid for it later! You might also notice a white sheen from the talc.]

Step seven: If you are going to hang the cross, then you need to make a 4- or 6-strand round plait about 2½ times the length of the cross. I tried to make my strands finer and thinner than the strands of the cross so that the plait is as fine as possible. Trim the core at the top of the cross. This strand is then worked into the core of the cross, making sure that the loop is oriented in the right direction: perpendicular to the face of the cross if it is to go on a necklace, parallel to the face if you want to hang it on the wall…

Step eight: Unplait back to where you have tied off one of the arms of your cross. Even though it is a pain, do it one bunch at a time and retie the bunch. Peel back the plait strands and cut the core. NB I managed on one occasion to nick one of the plaiting strands! So extra care needed here!

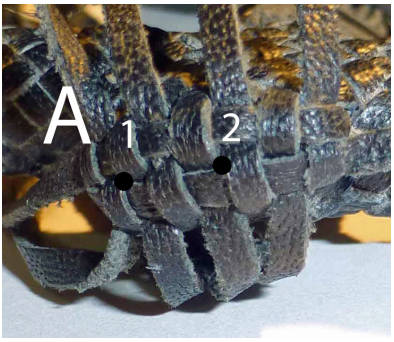
Step nine: Untie one of the bunches – probably best to do the lateral arms first – making sure the ends are more or less evenly distributed around the perimeter of the branch and use the ends to tie the beginning of a Spritsail Sheet knot (ABOK 887, 888.) NB My version has two vertical and eight horizontal, is not doubled and does not involve "walling" (see the next two photographs).



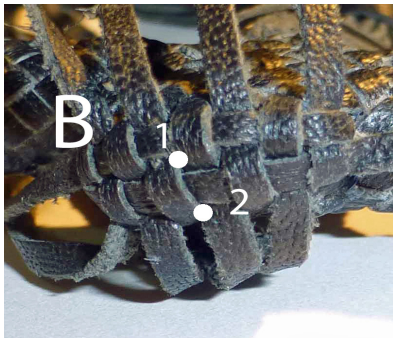
ABOK spritsail

Working with flat strands, I was looking for a more or less rectangular profile to the ends. If you are looking for a rounder cross-section, then you will have to find your own ending.

I found that for this step, once the knot is made, it is worth taking the time to systematically work round the knot several times and to get it tight. Another point is that I do not cut the ends until all four have been tied and tightened – just in case.



Loop parallel



Loop perpendicular

Step ten: repeat steps eight and nine for the other lateral arm of the cross and then the base – when you will also trim off the ends of the "loop plait".

Loop and spritsail

Step eleven: As you will have already trimmed the core at the top of the cross the Spritsail knot at the top can be tied around the "loop plait"

Step twelve: Now that you have completed four Spritsail knots, it is your last chance to fiddle with the tension of your plaits, if there is a glaring problem.

You should now have four Spritsail knots and four bunches of ten strands. Once the knots are tight trim the ends as close to the knot as possible without damaging any of the other strands. You can now remove the ties and it should become clear why we went to so many pains to keep the strands bunched: the first Spritsail knots should each have been tied with a set of left-hand or right hand strands.

Second spritsail

Step thirteen: Tie a second Spritsail knot over the first, again working tight before trimming the ends as close as possible.

All that is then left to do is to roll and or tap the plait to help the strands lie, remove any talc with compressed air and coat the finished job with leather finisher.

Eureka!

Congratulations if you have even read this to the end and even more so if you have been able to follow my explanations!

There are a couple of things that went wrong when I was working on these (I have only completed two so far!) and I am not sure that I can write instructions on how to cope with eventual difficulties. If you run into a problem, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Please, Please, PLEASE do share any efforts with us and even more so if you go for variants or embellishments.

By the way, for the eagle-eyed – before you start writing to the editor – I presume you noticed the error?

It was corrected without any harm to the environment, though the air was more blue than green for a while!

Did you notice?

Lanyards for US Navy Jack Knives
by Douglas W. Sprague

US Navy Rope or Jack Knife lanyards of the 19th Century

Whether as a weapon or tool, the knife has always been basic kit for the ordinary sailor. In the waning days of fighting under sail the sailor's sheath knife was replaced by the folding rope or jack knife. In fact, use of the sheath knife on board ship was forbidden by the US Navy in 1858. These regulations further required that "jack knives shall be worn with lanyards…". [1]

The folding rope knife is characterized by having a single blunt-nosed blade, generally about 3½ inches long. Closed, the knife is about 4½ inches in length. The handle has a bail, or hole, for attachment to a lanyard. The handles are commonly stag horn though early ones were of bone scored in a geometric pattern. Its beefy blade was designed to cut rope cleanly, usually with the help of a mallet or belaying pin. See Fig 1 which shows two examples.

Fig 1
Top: US Navy Issue Lanyard, attached to a rope knife marked Alfred Williams, Sheffield England on the obverse of its tang, and United States Navy on its blade, and an AW initialed pen point on the tang's reverse, circa 1890s. [3]
Bottom: Sailor-made Lanyard, attached to a rope knife marked George Wostenholm IXL Cutlery on the obverse of its tang, and US Navy on its blade, circa 1860s. [3]

Rope knives used by sailors aboard US Naval vessels during the nineteenth century were produced by a number of manufacturers in Sheffield, England. Those marked with US Navy or United States Navy are thought to be of US Navy issue, or bought from US Navy stores.

At least 25 different manufacturers from Sheffield, and one from the United States, have been identified as producing these knives during this period. [2, 3]

The lanyard was a critical accessory in preventing loss of the knife. It was also a part of the sailor's uniform, as depicted in portraits from the mid to the end of the 19th century. The knife was either tucked into a pant or jumper pocket, depending on the configuration of the uniform. See Fig 2 showing a sailor circa late 1890s, with what appears to be a naval issue lanyard.

Fig 2 US Navy Sailor, with Naval Issue Knife Lanyard, circa 1890s.

It wasn't until 1897 that the exact shape and construction of the knife lanyard was specified by regulation. Specifically, the knife lanyard was to be "of bleached white cotton. To be flat sennit, one-half (1/2) to nine-sixteenths (9/16) of an inch wide, tightly laid up; to have a turk's head slide; and be long enough, when around the neck, to allow the knife to be used with arm extended". [4]

Earlier, in the US Navy Uniform Regulations of 1886, the knife lanyard was only required to be "white cotton of seaman-like make; knife always to be worn attached to lanyard". [5]

Whether official issue or sailor-made, the lanyard's length was to be sufficient to be usable at a sailor's outstretched arm, and having a Turk's Head slip knot. The knife lanyard, whether sailor-made or issue, along with the folding rope or jack knife, became part of the ordinary sailor's kit as steam replaced sail in the US Navy during the mid-nineteenth century.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to acknowledge Michael Silvey whose book and freely-shared knowledge of US Naval rope knives led to my interest in collecting them. My thanks also to John Burtram for his help in all things nautical, and to Mark Kasal for his encouragement in proceeding with the research for this article. Finally, I'd like to thank Bill Bennett for his help in photographing the subject lanyards and rope knives and Des Pawson for his fulsome encouragement.

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3. Silvey, Michael W., Pocket Knives of the United States Military, An Ongoing Journal, 2008; Michael W. Silvey, Pollock Pines, California, 7 -45.

4. Stacy, John, U.S. Navy Uniform Regulations – 1897, MC&H, Vol. 61, No. 3, (Fall 2009): 179-204.

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OBITUARIES

Cornelis Kooiman

Sadly, I have to report the death of Cornelius, as he was known, at age 90. Though not an IGKT member for some time now, he had belonged to the Guild for many years, and was well known for his interweaves. The many long-standing IGKT colleagues who met him will have fond memories of him.

After a life full of knots and knotting, Cornelius was still tying and enjoying comparatively good health, but unfortunately died as a result of a fall down stairs at his home.

Willeke van der Ham

Joe Soanes

We are sad to relate the news of the passing of Mr Joe Soanes, Master Rigger and member of the Pacific Americas Branch of the Guild.

Lindsey Philpott

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Back cover: Bell ropes by Joe Bennett see p24

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